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LOCAL NEWS

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Council chief criticizes Science City plans

Andrews: Transit can't support influx of 60,000

By Bill Myers
Examiner Staff Writer

Montgomery County Council President Phil Andrews vowed to fight ambitious plans for a massive biotechnology complex in Gaithersburg despite his colleagues' support for a light rail line through the "Science City" project.

"World-class traffic is not an acceptable trade-off for world-class science," Andrews said Monday. "It's a question of the balance."

Over Andrews' objections, the council voted last week to recommend a light rail line through the Science City area, along Interstate 270. Many Science City advocates saw it as an endorsement of their plans to put 60,000 workers in northern Montgomery County.

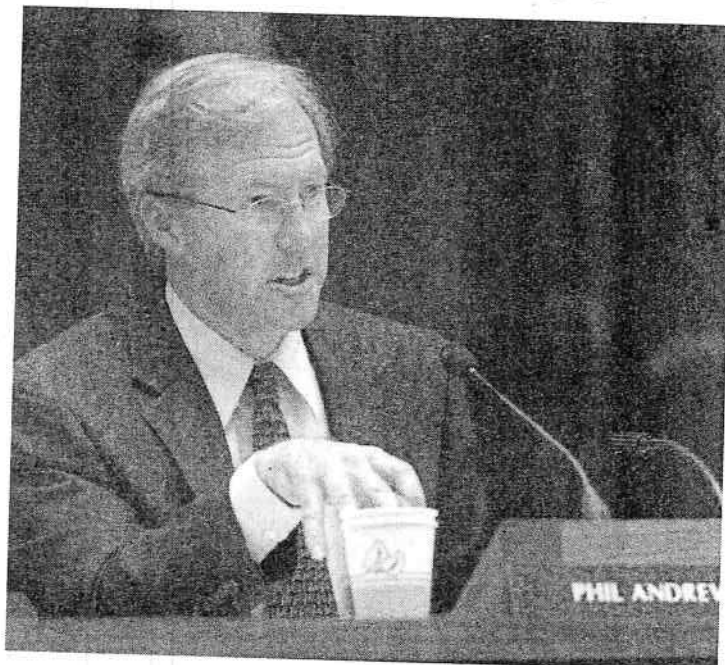
The biggest objections to Science City have come from those who — like Andrews — argue that there isn't enough mass transit infrastructure to support the hordes that would come to Science City.

Light rail could bring thousands of workers from Frederick to the Shady Grove Metro station, near the proposed campus.

But Andrews said voting for light rail doesn't mean a vote for Science City.

"It's not necessary to approve the proposed density to get light rail," he said. "That's an important point to make. It does not commit you, even if you want light rail."

Despite last week's recommen-



EXAMINER FILE

"World-class traffic is not an acceptable trade-off for world-class science," Montgomery County Council President Phil Andrews said of plans for a huge biotechnology complex.

dation for light rail, state officials won't make their decision until after the county is done deliberating on Science City, Andrews said. He reiterated predictions that the Science City proposal will be scaled back.

Until just a few years ago, the area in Gaithersburg West had been farmland. But developers, led by Johns Hopkins University, have big plans for the area. The I-270 corridor is already one of the nation's leading biotech areas, near the National Institutes of Health and the Food and Drug Administration.

Hopkins officials say their massive Science City plans would make it a world center for research and development.

The measure is in the council's economic development committee. A full vote is expected in February.

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